

PROGRAM COUNCIL REPORT

Good morning,

This is my first report as Program Council chair so I decided to begin my time by sharing this

Quote: “.it starts when you say **We** and know who you mean, and each day you mean one more.”
--Marge Piercy, from *The Low Road, Beloved Conversations*, April 2023.

I thought how do I start this report? After much deliberation, I decided to look to our governance documents to help me explain what the program council does and what we have accomplished this year. (Sometimes that organization chart is pretty confusing!) This is what I have the privilege of sharing with you today.

The revised Program Council policy states:

PURPOSE AND FORMATION: The Program Council is to address operational issues of the church. The Program Council shall be comprised of 6 liaisons to clusters of committees, activity groups, and task organizers with similar functions. The Program Council shall be led by the Program Council Chair whose selection is set forth in the Church Bylaws.

Under stewardship, the policy also states: “Whether through time, talent, or treasure (or more than one of these), each of us contributes to the common good as our personal circumstances allow. The Program Council remains committed to the church community as fully as possible even in times of difficulty, acknowledging that together we are stronger and heal more fully.” This last sentence is even more meaningful to me as you all have supported me and helped me in my healing since my beloved Ray died in January of this year.

The program council’s the work is done by the 6 Clusters each led by a great Cluster Liaison.

This year I had the pleasure of working with the following leaders:

Abby Lemburg McDowell, Youth in Action cluster

Barbara Pearson - Facilities Cluster

Patti Cuevas - Outreach Cluster

Judy Kelly- Adult Programs Cluster

Kathy Disney - Congregation Cluster

Bob Haack, - Sunday Services Cluster, replacing Jamie Radcliffe – thank you so very much Jamie for your service!

Today I am representing these 6 Cluster Leaders, and the members and leaders of the committees and Task Force groups of each Cluster reporting the accomplishments of this past church year.

I am so very proud of these accomplishments of the 2023-2024 Program Council including:

- Staff were invited to attend & participate in the monthly program council meetings.

- The bylaws were changed after discussion (and participation with the bylaws task force) to reflect that much of the program council activity has been moved to the revised policy for the program council.
- The Otoe-Missouria representatives returned to Lincoln in September, and the program Council assisted with hosting and providing a meal for them.
- Discussion on the Board of Trustees priority for 23-24; the program council continued to add the priorities to our monthly agenda, with emphasis on the third priority: “We commit to increasing involvement and engagement across all parts of the congregation and strengthening volunteer leadership.”
- The annual giving campaign began in early fall and was changed to reflect stewardship. *Stewardship is the value that embodies our responsibility to care for the Unitarian Church of Lincoln (UCL). Stewardship is not just about financial support, but also includes how we invest our time and talent in strengthening our church.*
- A zoom meeting was held with First UU in Omaha on Nov. 8th, they shared information on how they changed from a program council to a ministry team council governance.
- The Second chance auction in November was a huge success and raised well beyond the initial \$3,000 that was hoped to happen. Many many thanks to Karen Heafer and Barbara Pearson who co-chaired this delightful event, as well as all those who contributed.
- The program council decided that each cluster would “adopt a month” where they would do various activities throughout that month, such as host coffee, have a table after church, hold an activity to increase involvement and understanding of the program council.
- The outreach committee held the Winter Lecture Series via zoom: The 2024 lecture series was on global democracy and the evident rise of various strongmen. The topic was “Can Democracy Be Saved? The Global Trend Toward Strongman Rule.”
- The online auction held this Spring was a great success! Again, many thanks to the wonderful co-chairs, Karen Heafer and Barbara Pearson.
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- The Program Council and the Board of Trustees held a joint meeting in April, to clarify how the PC and BOT work together to increase congregational knowledge. Feedback was positive, with encouragement given to all the program council clusters and their members to attend the board retreat. Developing relationships is an important piece of this process!

- The Program Council was asked to take the lead on the opening of the time capsule that was placed 25 years ago. This is scheduled to happen May 26th, after the service. Articles from the time capsule will be on display at church for the next month.
- There are so many more accomplishments I could mention! Let me finish by saying how proud I am to represent this talented group, and to be a part of this congregation. I would like to close with this quote from the current Soul Matters “Why be a star when you can be a constellation” ~ Miriam Kaba